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THE Pamphlet Mission

FOR

FREEDOM, FELLOWSHIP AND CHARACTER

IN

RELIGION.

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VOLTAIRE.

BY REV. JOHN W. CHADWICK.

It will be one hundred years, come May 30th, since VOLTAIRE died in Paris, in the 85th year of his age. He had come from Ferney, near Geneva, where he had been living for about a score of years, preferring exile to imprisonment or any fetter on his lips. "Ovid in Pontus, puling for his Rome," could not have longed for the Eternal city, with its noisy games, with more avidity than Voltaire, himself Paris incarnate, longed for the city of the Seine. But he had less valor than discretion always, and so it was no easy matter for his niece, the foolish Madame Denis, to persuade him that his new tragedy demanded his immediate supervision. Nevertheless, she finally prevailed. Fancy him, a tall man, his form much bent with age, with the least possible flesh between his skin and bones, with hollow, toothless cheeks, protrusive nose and chin, and eyes incomparably bright and piercing and expressive. The Court and the ecclesiastics did not much relish being bearded thus, but all the rest of Paris went into raptures of delight over the old man. Benjamin Franklin came to see him and beseech his blessing for his grandson. "God and liberty," said Voltaire, "My child, remember these two words." At the Academy of Sciences, nothing would satisfy but that Voltaire and Franklin should hug and kiss each other. The days were one continuous ovation. The theatre had never heard such thunders of applause before. His bust was crowned with laurel, and he himself, no serious weight, borne on men's shoulders to his carriage, and followed by an immense throng to his hotel. "Do you wish to stifle me with roses?" said he as he passed out of their sight, forever. For these excitements were too much for his enfeebled health. Morbidly sensitive about the disposal of his body

after death, in order to insure it decent burial he called a priest and made some dubious confession. But a neighboring cure, thinking this too general, tried to force from him a confession of the deity of Christ. The dying man had already stretched his conscience to its farthest limit, and so he answered, "Let me never hear that man's name again; let me die in peace;" and a friend wrote at his dictation, "I die adoring God, loving my friends, not hating my enemies, and detesting superstition." Such was the death-bed repentance of Voltaire. Upon his death, the ecclesiastical authorities hastened to prevent his decent burial, but his nephew, the Abbe Mignot, had taken time by the forelock, and the bigots were too late. In 1791 the dust was taken up and transported, amid salvos of artillery and thunderous shoutings, to the Pantheon in Paris. The fevered ashes of Rousseau were not far off, and close beside him was laid the wretch Marat, the stroke of whose assassin he would have applauded.

Who was this man Voltaire, and what was his character, and what had he done, that on the one hand he was so ardently admired, and on the other hand so hated that his very corpse was reckoned a pollution? Many of you, no doubt, are well acquainted with the general outline of his career. In 1694 appeared Bayle's famous *Historical and Critical Dictionary*. Voltaire, the man who was to popularize the method of this learned chaos, was born in the same year, Feb. 20th, but for a time his life was so precarious that he was not baptized until the following November. His baptismal name was Francois Marie Arouet. The name Voltaire, which seems to us to express the very essence of his character,—such is the power of long association!—was assumed by him when he was twenty-eight years old, for what reason, good or bad, no one has yet been able to discover. His father was a notary, somewhat distinguished, who, destining his son for the law, sent him to the Jesuit College, Louis le Grand, in Paris. Later in life Voltaire raised an immoderate laugh at the expense of his *Alma Mater*, but, though all natural sciences were entirely neglected, in the classics his

teachers were Father Poree and the Abbe d' Olivet, two of the most gifted scholars of the time. Here he remained from ten to seventeen, and already, upon leaving, had an enviable reputation, especially for his poetic taste and skill.

Immediately on leaving college, his god-father, the Abbe Chateauneuf, introduced him into the most gay and frivolous and dissolute society of the time—a society of princes and ecclesiastics, in which the ecclesiastics were the more immoral; an abbe being almost universally a skeptic and a voluptuary. Certainly two or three abbes of Voltaire's acquaintance were of this sort, one of them, the Abbe Chaulieu, being the most erotic poet of the time. It was a gay life that Voltaire lived in this society. The wonder is that any particle of real earnestness survived. But though Voltaire never at any time attained to any Puritan severity of manners, ere he was twenty-two he had settled down into a life of earnest literary purpose, and from henceforth work was his dominant passion. The death of Louis XIV in 1715 was the signal for an outbreak of ribald joy, so cordially detested was he for the gloomy, hypocritic pietism and murderous zeal of his last thirty years. Amid the jests there came a deeper strain, a poem with the title "Things I have seen." The writer was not twenty, so he said, and he "had seen the Bastille and a thousand other prisons crowded with faithful subjects. He had seen the people groaning in the most cruel bondage. He had seen a demon (Madame de Maintenon) govern in a woman's form, and sacrifice her God, her religion and her soul to seduce the mind of a too credulous king. He had seen the mitre bought and sold. He had seen the hypocrite honored and the Jesuit adored." Voltaire, suspected of writing this,—and it was worthy of his genius and his heart, a genuine moral lyric—was thrown into the Bastille and kept there nearly a year. A gayer prisoner was never pent in any prison, nor a less idle. Though denied pen and paper, he completed his first tragedy, memorizing as he composed, and planned his famous epic, the Henriade, which his contemporaries thought a greater epic than the Eneid, but of which

Voltaire's wisest critic says: "Of poems whose names are known out of literary catalogues, it is perhaps the least worth reading in any language by any one but a professional student of letters." Getting out of the Bastille, he was presented to the Regent, the Duke d' Orleans, most profligate of men. A thunder storm was raging at the time. "Things couldn't go on worse if there was a Regency up there," said Voltaire, looking at the sky. The Duke forgave the slander for the wit, and Voltaire thanked him for his board but begged him never to trouble himself again about his lodgings.

Between affairs of literature and love, the years slipped by till 1725 or '26, when, having been insulted by a young duke, and having made a characteristic retort, he was caned a few days after by hired ruffians. Smarting with pain, but more with indignation, he challenged their cowardly employer to single combat. Averse to this, this gentleman procured a letter *de cachet*, and Voltaire found himself again in the Bastille. Released after six months, but ordered to leave Paris, despairing of redress, he betook himself to England. No line of conduct could have been more fortunate. By his residence in a country so much freer than his own, by contact with superior men, by contemplation of a society where ecclesiastical restraints were not appreciably felt, all that was best in his own tendencies was wonderfully encouraged, and he returned to France in 1728 the devoted apostle of English ideas and of English liberty; of the science of Newton and the philosophy of Locke; of innoculation for small pox, then but recently introduced in England, and of much beside that was most liberal, free and progressive. In the religious life of England, nothing impressed him so much as Quakerism, then little more than half a century old. Of his *Letters concerning the English Nation*, he devotes four out of twenty-four to them. Nothing could be more significant of his position on religious matters. Here was a sect that naturally invited him to some amusement, but it is surprising in how little he indulges. He has hardly anything for it but admiration. Its freedom from ceremonial observ-

ances, its moral earnestness, its condemnation of war as the most hateful of all anti-christian practices—all of these things excited in him a genuine sympathy, and we may be sure that if Christianity had presented itself to Voltaire only in this guise, he would never have considered it "the infamous," never have had any desire to "crush" it, and we should only know of him as the most brilliant literary exponent of the eighteenth century. The treatment which Voltaire's *English Letters* received is our best proof how just his admiration was of English liberty. For this book which he could publish in England with impunity, in France was seized and burned by order of the Parliament of Paris, and its publisher was thrown into the Bastille; whereupon Voltaire, having so much more to say that he had no disposition to make a martyr of himself in middle life, exiled himself from Paris and made his home at Cirey, in Champagne, the country residence of Madame du Chatelet. Henceforth his visits to Paris were short and secret. The danger of arrest and imprisonment was constantly before his eyes. Even at Cirey he could not always feel himself safe, and many a lumbering journey over abominable roads was dictated by that prudence which was a remarkable characteristic of one so ardent and impulsive as Voltaire was for the most part. But besides this prudence, a perpetual restlessness often hurried him hither and thither, so that he hardly had a home till he was more than sixty years of age. The days at Cirey were not those of nectar-sipping gods; rather were they full of toil. Whatever the relation of Voltaire to the Madame du Chatelet,—questionable enough, though it has found eloquent apologists,—it is not to be doubted that the principal bond between them was intellectual. Madame du Chatelet was one of the most gifted women of her time. She and Voltaire saw little of each other. He was busy with his studies and experiments; she with her translation of Newton's Principia, and other similar occupations. For fifteen years (till 1749) Voltaire and his distinguished friend encouraged each other in the pursuit of knowledge. In all France there were not two busier people, nor two more

eager and less partizan in their search for scientific truth. During these years, Voltaire wrote several of his most impressive tragedies, several comedies and satires, his *Seven Discourses on Man*, a great many philosophical papers, that which he never should have written, *La Pucelle*, a burlesque poetical biography of Joan of Arc, a match for the impurities of Byron's Don Juan, and the most significant of all his historical works, the *Essay on the Morals and Spirit of Nations*. This had been preceded by his Charles XII and Age of Louis XIV. The three coincide with an important progress in his ideas of what history should be: the first was a piece of merely personal aggrandizement, the second was the history of an age, in which persons and personal interests were of secondary value and the general movement of society was of principal importance. In this essay on the *Morals and Spirit of Nations*, this relative significance of the particular and general is more strongly marked, and we have a wonderful foreshadowing of the best modern historical method; may we not even say, a wonderful example of this method?

As early as 1735, Frederick the Great, of Prussia, had entered into correspondence with Voltaire, for whom his admiration was immense. Coming to the throne a few years later, he invited Voltaire to make his home in Berlin. This, Voltaire's devotion to Madame du Chatelet and his contentment with the life at Cirey forbade; but visit followed visit, and in 1750, (Madame du Chatelet having died the year before,) Voltaire, despairing of any decent royal recognition in his own country, betook himself with Louis's curt permission to the court of Frederick. The friendship of the Pompadour, which he had for a time enjoyed, had been transferred to Crebillon, whose tragedies were brought out with every possible advantage. Voltaire revenged himself by taking three of Crebillon's principal subjects and writing tragedies upon them, so obviously superior to Crebillon's that court and poet were both made to appear contemptible. But Voltaire's residence at Frederick's court proved the least satisfactory and most humiliating episode

of his whole career. It ended in a most inglorious squabble, in which the principal actors were Frederick and Voltaire and Maupertuis, a natural philosopher whom Frederick had enticed from France. This Maupertuis had much learning but more vanity. Having by an adventurous voyage verified Newton's demonstration that the earth is an oblate spheroid, he had his portrait painted with his hand gently flattening the North pole of a painted globe. He had treated a friend of Voltaire's shamefully, and soon after made a remarkable fool of himself in certain philosophic letters. Here was Voltaire's opportunity; to punish Maupertuis for his ill-treatment of his friend, he made Europe shake with inextinguishable laughter, by such a satire as Voltaire alone could write. Frederick was mightily offended for Maupertuis was *his* philosopher. He had Voltaire's satire publicly burned; after this a separation was inevitable; each shot a Parthian arrow; Voltaire's, another squib; Frederick's, an order of arrest and search for certain decorations and a volume of his own poems of which he had much reason to be ashamed. But all of this commotion sobered down at length into an amicable correspondence. It was impossible that these two men should not profoundly admire each other, and suspect each other as profoundly. And there was ample ground for both the admiration and suspicion.

This squabble was in 1753, and the next twenty-five years (from 60 to 85) were the valuable and important of Voltaire's life. During all these years he did not once go to Paris, till a few months before his death; they were spent in Switzerland—the last nineteen in Ferney; he owned another residence in Berne, and still another just across the French border; "for," he said, "philosophers ought to have two or three holes under ground against the hounds who chase them." These were the years which steadily resounded with Voltaire's attack upon "the Infamous." "Crush the Infamous;" this was his watchword in these years; and by "the Infamous" he meant not the Christianity of Jesus or of Wm. Penn, but the Christianity of Roman Catholicism in the eighteenth century; a Christianity

without intelligence, without earnestness, without morality, whose priests encouraged every form of ignorance and superstition, whose higher ecclesiastics were often gamblers and voluptuaries, and which, whether Jesuit or Jansenist was uppermost, stood first and always for darkness against light, arming itself with all the natural weapons of intolerance and persecution. New tragedies and comedies abounded in these later years, but their most characteristic work was moral and polemical. The Lisbon earthquake, which gave the first impulse to young Goethe's thinking in Frankfort at the tender age of six, was felt in Voltaire's library as nowhere else in Europe; hence, *Candide, the Optimist*, that tremendous satire on the shallow optimism of Pope and Bolingbroke, and a little later the poem on the Lisbon earthquake, perhaps the deepest cry that Voltaire ever uttered. Rousseau was horrified that one, himself so rich and happy, should lay bare the miseries of his brother men with such relentless truth. As if it were not the glory of Voltaire that he did not erect his own good fortune into a scheme of universal happiness; that his own wealth and happiness did not blind him to the poverty and misery of his fellow men. These later years produced also a great many little tales, the vehicles, almost without exception, of an earnest moral purpose. But most notably of all, in quantity and in directness of moral purpose, they produced the numerous contributions of Voltaire to the Encyclopedia of Diderot and D' Alembert, and the whole of his own many-volumed Philosophical Dictionary, in which he gave his fancy and his conscience freer play than in the Encyclopedia. This Encyclopedia, which in its day was considered a stupendous monument of infidelity, and which made "the Encyclopedists" from henceforth a name for bigotry to conjure with, would for the most part seem very old-fashioned and conservative to a modern reader. The new edition of the Encyclopedia Brittanica is, upon the whole, much more advanced in its conclusions. It departs much more widely from the type of orthodoxy current midway of the 18th century, but as yet its most radical article has been unable to convict Prof. Smith of heresy before his Presbyterian judges.

The tastes of Voltaire were always princely, and his abundant fortune, which he had himself amassed by shrewd investments, independently of his literary income, to which he was indifferent, enabled him to live at Ferney the life of a Grand Seigneur. He had his private theatre, and his private church with the inscription "*Deo erexit Voltaire*," (Voltaire erected this to God,) smacking of patronage, perhaps, a little more than of theistic devotion. Here his hospitality was unbounded; often he housed and entertained a score of guests. A rude hamlet of four or five dilapidated houses he converted by his enterprise into a model village of one hundred pretty dwellings, whose inhabitants regarded him as their visible Providence. The arch enemy of Jesuits, upon the abolition of their order in 1762, he made one of them the almoner of his far-reaching bounties. "This is Father Adam," said Voltaire, introducing him, "but he is not the first man." The niece of Corneille found shelter and education under his generous roof. And there were splendid fetes, and there was ample industry and sparkling gaiety, and a correspondence marvellous in its extent and brilliancy; and so the end drew on, the Paris visit, the unexampled triumph, and the dying prayer: "O God, whom all things proclaim! O God, who knowest me, hear my last words! If I have deceived myself, it has been through searching for thy laws; my heart may have wandered, but it was full of thee; I wait the approach of eternity without anxiety; I cannot believe that thou, who hast showered so many blessings on me here, wilt torment me forever when my days on earth are ended." The last letter that he ever wrote was to young Lally, whose father had been unjustly put to death. For years Voltaire had been laboring to have the sentence reversed, and the stain upon a good man's memory blotted out. The news came to him upon his dying bed that success had at length crowned his efforts. With his own trembling hand he wrote: "I die content; I see that the king loves justice." The ruling passion of his life was strong in death.

The most admired and the worst hated man in Europe was

no more. What did he signify? To what extent was he truly admirable, and to what extent did he deserve the hatred which men heaped upon his living head and still heap upon his memory?

Aside from all moral and religious considerations, his place in literature is among the great immortals. What Homer is to Greece, Goethe to Germany, Shakspeare to England, Cervantes to Spain, that Voltaire is to France—her greatest literary name. Among Frenchmen he has superiors in some directions; his humor is not comparable with Montaigne's, his comedy with Moliere's, his eloquence with Bossuet's; but in his total manifestation, he is easily first of all his countrymen. The proverb says: "That man is terrible who does one thing." But Voltaire did many things with almost equal excellence. He has been called the French Virgil; but he was just as much the French Horace and the French Cicero and the French Lucretius, and the French Tacitus, and we are still left without any Roman representative of his twenty-six tragedies, in his life time the most successful of his literary work. One cannot but admire this wonderful versatility and the enormous industry by which it was attended. Be sure that no unworthy passion could have seriously engrossed a man who was the most indefatigable worker of his generation. His passion was for knowledge, justice, "peace on earth." There are eighty volumes of his works, and the edition is still incomplete. He wrote twenty-six tragedies, poems innumerable, much valuable history, a great variety of tales, and a mass of philosophical and critical essays and discussions that range through every imaginable subject which was of vital interest to eighteenth century men. "After all, my dear friend," he writes to Cideville, "it is right to give every possible form to our soul; it is a flame that God has entrusted to us and we are bound to feed it with all that we find most precious; so long as it does not go in pell-mell, there is plenty of room for everything."

And now in regard to the quality of all this versatile performance. The quality of none of it was the highest possible.

The genius of Voltaire was particular, and not universal; he is not now, he never will be, the poet of all civilized lands like Homer and Shakspeare, upon both of whom he set a moderate value. Himself supremely elegant, a classic poet, these seemed to him barbarous. After three hundred years, Shakspeare is more to his countrymen than Voltaire to his (as a poet,) after one hundred. We have revolted from classicism; the revolt began in Voltaire's own time. Jean Jacques Rousseau was the leader of it. And so to us the tragedies of Voltaire seem over-bred and stilted and declamatory. To his contemporaries they did not appear so; they could not hear them or read them without violent emotion. We find Marmontel, in his delightful memoirs, reading Tancrede with streaming eyes. In comedy, to which humor is necessary, Voltaire was not successful, for humor was not in his line. Wit, satire and sarcasm—he had these abundantly, but not humor, the Cinderella sister of these flashing dames. Voltaire was the wittiest of Frenchmen, and in being so was—may I not dare to say it?—the wittiest man that ever held a pen. This spirit was given to him without measure; it is not an occasional sparkle but a perpetual flash and gleam. And almost without exception it is the ally of justice and humanity. It is the weapon of his hatred of intolerance and superstition. I dare believe that it is never wilfully the weapon of licentiousness. Even in *La Pucelle*, the means only are licentious, the motive is not so. It spoiled Joan of Arc for Voltaire that she was a fanatic and that superstition made for itself a fortress of her name; hence the most witty and immoral poem that he ever wrote.

Upon the side of history, the labors of Voltaire—though an immense advance on anything which had appeared since the sad-hearted Tacitus lamented that the vices of the Roman people had rendered it impossible for the gods to be gracious to them—were the immediate forerunners of other labors so much more important, especially those of Robertson and Gibbon, that Voltaire is apt to get less credit upon this score than he deserves. His Charles and Louis are still among the most enter-

taining of histories. His *Manners and Spirit of Nations* was one of the first examples of a method which has since become *the* method of historical presentation, finding its last and ablest representative in Green's new *History of the English People*, a history not of battles and intrigues, but of political, industrial, intellectual and moral evolution. In this work of Voltaire's, there are many judgments which have since been reversed. It is not a book for us to read for careful information; but for the time when it appeared, its information was the carefullest that could be had, and of its general conclusions, many have stood remarkably well the brunt of subsequent investigations.

The novels and romances of Voltaire would be excluded from the realm of art by M. Taine's standard: "A work of art must be devoid of any moral purpose." Not one of these is so. Candide and Zadig and the rest are the weapons of a moral warfare against those enormities which to Voltaire were different aspects of the more general "Infamous," of which ecclesiastical Christianity was but a single manifestation. Whatever shortened life, or made it miserable; poverty and war; intolerance and persecution; civil corruption; court intrigue; quack philosophy; the laziness of priests; the ignorance of the people, and their neglect by those who should have been their teachers—such were the evils by which Voltaire found himself confronted, turn whichever way he would, and, coarse or fine, his novels and romances were so many blows square in the face of these enormities. Nowhere in these stories does he ever satirize religion or morality. The one moral of them all is that truth, unselfishness, genuine religion, freedom of thought and speech, brotherly love, are the good angels of humanity; that its bad angels are hypocrisy and cant, and falsehood, and selfishness, and bigotry, and superstition.

There still remain for our consideration those writings in which he dealt with philosophical and moral and religious subjects with absolute directness, save as he ever and anon assures us that for himself he believes everything and explains nothing.

His sarcastic expressions of intellectual humility, of his inability to comprehend the adorable mysteries which nevertheless he piously accepts, deceived nobody; they were not intended to. These essays and discussions, of which his Philosophical Dictionary contains the most important, touch upon every subject that was vital to the interests of the eighteenth century, especially upon every subject that nearly or remotely concerned the Christian religion; its literature, the bible; its organization, the church. Of all that Voltaire wrote upon these subjects, it would be very strange if much were not already out of date, but as I read him here, my wonder is to find how much of him has been endorsed by subsequent investigation; not in mere matters of detail, but in the general outlines of his thought. There is here many a rough draft of what has since been made complete. But in his anxiety to worst his adversaries, he sometimes matched their theories with others almost equally absurd. The discovery of the ark atop of Ararat would not have been regarded by Voltaire's contemporaries as a more convincing evidence of the flood than the sea shells discovered on the Alps. Geology was then too infantile to help him out; so he insisted that these shells had all been dropped by pious pilgrims crossing the mountains on their way to Rome. The vice of all his biblical criticism was that he treated the bible as a contemporary writing. Relatively to his antagonists, he had a perfect right to do this. An infallible bible ought at least to stand the tests of the most modern science and morality. But absolutely considered his method was entirely wrong. A believer in progress, as he was, scouting the doctrine of Rousseau that modern civilization was inferior to the primitive condition of mankind, somehow it never occurred to him to treat the bible as one step in the great onward march of history. But practically his failure to do this was a great advantage; so fine a theory would have been altogether wasted on the coarse-brained fanatics to whom he found himself opposed, and the ill-cultured public to which he appealed. His method was exactly suited to the purpose which he had in hand; he

treated the bible as a flat surface; he allowed nothing for perspective; nothing for difference of time and place. Every scientific statement in the bible he judged as if it had just been written; every action of prophet and apostle as if it had been done in Paris or Geneva only the day before. Every inconsistency, every impurity, every absurdity, he haled before the bar of a remorseless common sense, and then triumphantly demanded "Is this your infallible bible?" And therefore it must be allowed that he failed almost utterly to appreciate the real significance of the bible; he could not, if for no other reason than because it was not classical. It was too much like Homer, whom he detested; too much like Gothic architecture, which he despised.

In one respect, his hatred of the priests entrapped him into acquiescence with Rousseau's theory of the degeneracy of mankind. Hateful as this theory was to him in general, he accepted so much of it as asserted that a pure Monotheism was the original religion of mankind, and that this had been degraded by the priests into the various forms of polytheistic worship. But, in declaring Roman Catholic Christianity to be a miserable perversion of primitive Christianity, he was clearly right. Nothing of evolution is worth considering which does not admit that the stream of progress often bends upon itself, flowing back into the darkness on its way to the perennial light.

But we should make a great mistake to judge Voltaire by the exactness of his theories and their correspondence with the established doctrines of the present time. He had an insatiable curiosity; a more passionate desire for knowledge has never animated any human being; but he was no learned Dry-as-dust. He might have been ten times as learned as he was and we should scarcely have heard of him, if to his knowledge had not been superadded such a gift of style as no other man has ever had for just the task to which he found himself invited. It was a style which brought Bayle down from the clouds and made him walk the earth. It was a style of miraculous clearness; of immense vivacity; of such wit and sarcasm as no

other man, of any time, has been so all compact. "Half a dozen light, apparently careless, words, and behold a whole generation's folly so completely turned inside out, that the dullest must see its drollery, and the gravest must laugh at it." Voltaire was not a democrat and had not democratic ways, but his style was democracy incarnate. These who could read at all, could understand.

What was the nature and what was the motive of the attack which Voltaire made upon the organized religion of his time? The common understanding is that he was an out-and-out opponent of religion; that he was an atheist in his creed; that the name of God, as well as that of Christ, stood for nothing sacred and precious in his thought. But such an understanding is consistent only with absolute ignorance of the man and what he taught. He wrote to D'Alembert: "I want you to crush the Infamous; that is the great point; it must be reduced to the position it occupies in England; 'tis the greatest service that can be rendered to the human race. You will perceive that I speak only of superstition; as for religion, I love and respect it as you do." Nor did he ever write a word that disagreed with this explicit statement. His writings everywhere imply the existence and the ruling providence of God. Not only so, but explicit statements to the same effect occur by hundreds and thousands. Whole essays and romances are devoted to the proofs of theism. "Atheism and fanaticism," he said, "are two monsters which rend society and devour it." But of these two monsters, he considered atheism the less terrible. With Plutarch and with Bacon, he was thoroughly convinced that total absence of belief was better than belief in such a God as that of Jesuit or Jansenist theology. He would rather men should say there was no such person as Voltaire than say that he had brought a swarm of children into life only that he might give over the most of them to be tortured endlessly. And so he felt sure that God would rather have men deny his existence altogether than attribute to him such a character as that ascribed to him by Augustine and Calvin. But I shall do best

to let him speak for himself—recite the creed which he has written, and let you judge of it for yourselves: "I believe in one God alone, and I love him; I believe in one alone because there can be but one soul of the great All, a single vivifying Being, a sole Creator. I believe in God, the Father Almighty; because he is the common father of nature and of all men, who are equally his children. I believe that God being our common father, we are bound to regard all men as our brothers. I believe that the persecutor is abominable. I believe that theological disputes are at once the most ridiculous farce and the most dreadful scourge of the earth." It must however be confessed, that while Voltaire was ever ready to affirm the existence of a Deity, and while the dogmatic atheism of Diderot was altogether repulsive to him, he was a good deal of what we now call an *Agnostic*. He had no inclination to "talk about God as if he were a man on the next street." That He is, that the order of the universe is ample testimony of his power and wisdom, that He rewards the good and punishes the wicked by no arbitrary decree, but by the simple process of cause and effect—this was the sum of all that he aspired to know. He never imagined that he could explain everything; he found himself often in the dark. But he had great faith in the increasing knowledge of mankind, and not a little in another life where some dark things would be made clear, and some inequalities be smoothed away.

But if Voltaire was not an atheist, men say, he was certainly an infidel. If by an infidel they mean a person who did not believe the theological statements generally current and authoritative in his time, Voltaire's infidelity does not admit of any doubt whatever. He did not believe in the accepted creed of Romanists or Protestants; he did not believe the bible or the church to be infallible or inspired; he did not believe in the Trinity or the Atonement, or in total depravity or endless hell; he did not believe in election or reprobation; he did not believe that Jesus was the Infinite God, nor that he was miraculously born, nor that he rose from the dead, nor that he wrought one

single miracle; he did not believe in one of all the seven sacraments of the Roman Church. He treated the mass especially with infinite contempt. And what is more, he identified all of these doctrines and these sacraments with Christianity. When he spoke of Christianity, he always had these things in his mind; when he called it "the Infamous," it was because he identified it with these things, and also with the intolerance and persecution of those who were the constituted defenders of these doctrines and these sacraments. But if Christianity had presented itself to him as it presents itself to us in such men as Principal Tulloch and Dean Stanley, you may be very sure he would not have thought of calling it "the Infamous;" he would not have arrayed himself against it. Remember how respectfully he treated Quakerism, notwithstanding the fanatical elements which were involved in it. No other man ever hated fanaticism so much, but he hated war still worse, and ecclesiasticism still worse; and when he found a sect that condemned war and had no priests, he had nothing for it but respect and sympathy. But why did he not labor to reform Christianity instead of trying to destroy it? Because the Roman Catholic Christianity of France seemed to him long past all hope of reformation; he thought it rotten to the core; it was "the Infamous;" to crush it was the only means of saving men from its immeasurable curse.

Let it be noted here that Voltaire did not identify the Christianity of his own time with the Christianity of Jesus. He did not hold Jesus responsible for the abominations of the Jesuits and Jansenists. And for Jesus, as he estimated his character and work, he had no contempt, but only admiration. I must confess that what he says of Jesus is in exact accord with my own thought. In his own words it is "that Jesus preached a pure morality; that he announced the kingdom of heaven as the reward of the just; that he had disciples attached to his person and his virtues; that those very virtues drew upon him the persecutions of the priests; that through calumny he was put to a shameful death; that Christianity was more likely to succeed by his death than if he had not been persecuted. Seventy

individuals convinced of the innocence of their leader, the purity of his manners, the barbarity of his judges, must influence many a feeling heart." That was abominable heresy in the eighteenth century, but in the nineteenth it is pretty good orthodoxy. Elsewhere we have another and more critical statement of his belief concerning Jesus: "He was born under the Mosaic Law; he fulfilled all its precepts; he kept all its feasts; he did not reveal the mystery of his incarnation; he never told the Jews he was born of a Virgin; he never spoke of the seven sacraments; he instituted no ecclesiastical hierarchy during his life. He concealed from his contemporaries that he was the Son of God, begotten from all eternity, consubstantial with the Father, and that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father through the Son. He did not say that his person was composed of two nature and two wills. In the eyes of men he was no more than a just man, pleasing to God, persecuted by the envious, and condemned to death by prejudiced magistrates." Of miracles ascribed to Jesus, of theories of his divinity, and so on, Voltaire was as disrespectful as only he could be of superstition and absurdity; but of Jesus, as the teacher of a pure morality and holy trust, he was more reverent than any priest or bishop of his time.

And still we dally in the outer courts of this man's character and aim. For he had very little speculative interest in Christianity. If Christianity, as he encountered it, had been the friend of poverty, the instructor of the people, the advocate of civil justice, the enemy of cruel wars; if it had withheld its hand from persecution and been tolerant of various opinions within its ample fold, Voltaire would not have attacked its creeds and sacraments with half—nay, with a hundredth part of the tremendous energy he actually brought to bear upon them. Voltaire believed in knowledge as the one great source of human happiness; and he believed in "peace on earth, good will among men," as did no other man in Europe in his day. But he saw that the Christian Church was the great refuge of ignorance; he saw that the priests, instead of educating the people, did all

they could to make their ignorance more dense; he saw that the ecclesiastics opposed themselves to every new discovery; that they barricaded every avenue along which science threatened to approach. If this were all, Voltaire might still have gone his way, comparatively indifferent. But this was not all; this was the smallest part. Voltaire had a nervous horror of all cruelty, a burning hatred of injustice. But cruelty and injustice were the most characterteristic manifestations of the Christian spirit in his time. A few examples here will serve my purpose better than any generalization. In 1762, the son of John Calas, of Toulouse, committed suicide; morbid and unhappy, he had prepared his mind for such an act by reading all the literature of suicide that he could find; but it occurred to some one that his father had hung him to prevent his turning Catholic. The act how natural! And what an easy way of compassing the death of an able-bodied man! There was not a particle of evidence; Calas had been remarkably tolerant; another son, who had turned Catholic, he had still treated handsomely; he had had a Catholic servant in his house for many years; the young man's body bore no signs of violence; his linen was not rumpled. But because some superstitious knave chose to imagine that he had been murdered, his father was put to the torture and finally put to death; his wife and children were also put to the torture. The news came to Voltaire; the wife and children also came to him; he gave them shelter; he did more; he made all Europe ring with his recital of the infernal crime which had been committed in the name of justice and religion. And he did this so effectually that in due time, though Calas could not be brought to life again, his sentence was reversed, and his wife and children had their property, of which they had been robbed, restored to them. "Who is that whom such a crowd is following?" asked some one of a poor woman in Paris during Voltaire's triumph there in 1778. The answer was, "He is the savior of Calas." Now do you wonder that he was admired by some and, for the same things, hated by others? Another instance: Sirven, a citizen of Castres,

near Toulouse, had been deprived of his daughter, a poor, simple creature, by the ecclesiatical authorities, who shut her up in a convent. With bleeding flesh, and mind still more enfeebled by the treatment she had received for her soul's good, she made her escape, and her body was soon after found at the bottom of a well. Accused of murdering her, Sirven made his escape and joined the family of Calas in Voltaire's sanctuary of the unfortunate, his poor wife perishing among the snows of the Cevennes upon the way. Nevertheless, both Sirven and his wife were condemned to be hung, with their two remaining daughters standing on the scaffold. For eight years Voltaire endeavored to reverse this sentence, and at last succeeded, but only after he had operated on a thousand lines of influence. He gave himself no rest, he spared himself no labor or expense till he had compelled the courts to render tardy justice to his poor clients, who could only pay him with their love. One instance more: At Abbeville, in the north of France, a crucifix was found to have been mutilated. Two lads, La Barre and D'Etallonde, only sixteen years old, were accused of having committed the offense. If they had done so, worse crimes could be imagined; but there was no evidence against them; still it was considered evidence that they had once been heard to speak disrespectfully of the Virgin Mary, and that they secretly admired the Philosophical Dictionary of Voltaire. D'Etallonde escaped; La Barre was sentenced to have his tongue torn out, his right hand cut off, and afterwards to be burned alive. The first and second things were done; the Parliament of Paris commuted the third to decapitation. Voltaire had only twelve years more to live, but his one great endeavor through these years was to have the sentence of La Barre reversed; but it was all in vain; he died without that satisfaction.

It was such things as these that made the Christian Church of France appear the Infamous in Voltaire's eyes. Do you wonder that they did? Was infamous too harsh a word for such intolerance and persecution? It was no *prince of persifleurs*, as Carlyle calls Voltaire, it was the most earnest man in Europe

and the most humane, who wrote to D'Alembert after the legal murder of LaBarre: "This is no longer a time for jesting; witty things do not go well with massacres. * * * Here, Calas broken on the wheel; there, Sirven condemned to be hung; further off, a gag thrust into the mouth of a lieutenant general; a fortnight after that five youths condemned to the flames for extravagances that deserved nothing worse than St. Lazarre! Is this the country of philosophy and pleasure? It is the country rather of the St. Bartholemew massacre. The Inquisition would not have ventured to do what these Jansenist judges have done." Voltaire's humanity was not confined to the limits of his own country. He labored as assiduously to prevent the judicial murder of Admiral Byng in England, as that of Lally in France; he left no stone unturned. Byng had been accused of not getting near enough to the French fleet; Voltaire procured from its commander a complete exoneration; but again his efforts were in vain. Aside from all ecclesiastical considerations, Voltaire was in his day the most distinguished advocate of civil justice, and raised up a host of writers, who, following up his attack, at length succeeded in imposing upon judicial procedures a few just restraints and regulations, so that caprice and passion might not determine everything, and the distinction between different kinds of evidence might not be wholly disregarded. "Voltaire," says Lecky, and his testimony is all the more valuable because Voltaire's ways are not his ways, "Voltaire was at all times the unflinching opponent of persecution. No matter how powerful was the persecutor or how insignificant the victim, the same scathing eloquence was launched against the crime, and the indignation of Europe was soon concentrated upon the oppressor. The fearful storm of sarcasm and invective that avenged the murder of Calas, the magnificent dream in the *Philosophical Dictionary* reviewing the history of persecution from the slaughtered Canaanites to the latest victims who had perished at the stake, the indelible stigma branded upon the persecutors of every age and creed, all attested the intense and passionate earnestness with which Voltaire addressed him-

self to his task. On other subjects, a jest or a caprice would often turn him aside. When attacking intolerance, he employed, indeed, every weapon, but he employed them all with the concentrated energy of a profound conviction. His success was equal to his zeal; the spirit of intolerance sank blasted beneath his genius; wherever his influence passed, the arm of the Inquisition was palsied, the chain of the captive riven, the prison door flung open. Beneath his withering irony, persecution appeared not only criminal but loathsome, and since his time it has ever shrunk from observation, and masked its features under other names. He died leaving a reputation that is indeed far from spotless, but *having done more to destroy the greatest of human curses than any other of the sons of men.*" Now you can understand why he was so admired and loved in his last days, and why the ecclesiastical authorities would fain have robbed his lifeless body of a few feet of consecrated earth.

This is the one thing to remember in determining the merits and demerits of Voltaire's attack upon the organized Christianity of his time; it was the organized Christianity of ignorance and superstition, of cruel Jesuits and more cruel Jansenists, of the torture wheel, the brand, the stake, the gallows, of trials without justice, and murder without pity. And hence it was to him the infamous; hence he would "Crush the Infamous." And all his writings on religious subjects took form and color from this dominating passion of his life. All the belongings of a church which was the apologist of war, the armory of persecution, the nurse of superstition, were hateful to him and abominable. It was as *the Bible of this Church* that the bible invited on itself all the resources of his matchless raillery and scorn. Could he convict it of absurdity, of immorality, of inconsistency, he was doing something to help crush the Infamous. It was as *the history of this church* that Christian history seemed to him only a mingled stream of blood and tears. The quarrels of councils, the forgeries of priests, the rapacity of bishops, the licentiousness of popes,—it was from no mere love of dirt, from no contempt of human nature, that he burrowed

in this mass of sewage; no, but because he would crush the Infamous, the Church of his own time, the murderer of Calas and LaBarre, by making it contemptible in every possible way. Hence, doubtless, much exaggeration; hence, constant failure to perceive that, in the march of history, it must needs be that offences come; that on its way to the perfect, humanity passes through many stages and generates its own oppressors. But hence, also, a great deal of simple truth, which we, on the one hundredth anniversary of his death, can utter without fear of wheel or stake, thanks in good part to his unwearying endeavors to break the iron-clad arm of persecution, and establish on the earth a toleration broad as the range of human difference of speech and thought.

The man, of whom so much in simple justice must be said, was strangely mixed of worse and better traits. He was not a complete man; he was not by any means a saint; we miss in him the note of holiness; there are stains upon his character which no apologist can quite obliterate. But even here we must not be too hard upon him. I do not like his hankering for royal recognition; I do not like his asking Louis XV, that Western Turk, "Is Trajan satisfied?" when he had heaped on him some fulsome flattery. But did not Sir Walter Scott beg of George IV, at Edinburgh, the glass in which he had drunk his royal toddy? Granted that Voltaire's brilliant pages are often disfigured with licentiousness, and that his life apparently was of a piece with them; but then remember that times change and the manners with them. He wrote nothing which fine ladies could not hear without a blush. Condemn his morals but remember that they were the morals of the average ecclesiastics of the time; the morals too of our own Franklin, of our own Hamilton; there is good reason to believe of our own Washington—no better because theirs; but no worse in Voltaire than in the Abbe Chateauneuf or Alexander Hamiton; nay, not so bad, for one of these was pledged to chastity, the other to fidelity. Voltaire was certainly no hypocrite. There was a certain lack of dignity about him always. He went off into fearful

rages; fancy the author of the Henriade boxing a bookseller's ears, and his Italian secretary, anxious to mend matters, interposing, "Sir, sir, you have had your ears boxed by the greatest man in Europe." I must confess I hardly like him less for these explosions. He had a child's impulsiveness; his resentments soon burned themselves out. "We must forgive our enemies," said Heine, "but not till they are hung." Voltaire could seldom wait so long as that; if now and then he showed himself capable of deep resentment, at other times he showed himself capable of forgiving the most cruel and intolerable wrongs. It may have been because he felt so sure of his position, but envy, by which he was every day assailed, found scanty harbor in his breast. Young men fighting their first battles were always sure of his encouragement; criticism and money both, if both were needed. It speaks great things for him that those who knew him best were passionately fond of him. Because he was not a beggar like Rousseau, he has been called avaricious; he valued money because he valued independence; but Father Adam, his Jesuit almoner, and Sirven, and Calas, and the niece of Corneille, never suspected him of being avaricious. Nevertheless, let every fault be noted down; granted that they were many. These petty quarrels with the publishers who pirated his books, often with his connivance! What say you? Shall we laugh or cry about them? I hardly know. But this I know: take him for all in all, Voltaire was undeniably the most inspired and most inspiring prophet of a new and better day for human-kind that Europe furnished in the eighteenth century. France need not fear to match her greatest literary chief with England or with Germany. Though nothing in his purely literary work has the perennial freshness of Shakspere's plays and Goethe's lyrics, there was a man behind the artist such as we seek in vain behind the mask of Shakspere—such as the magnificent Goethe had nowhere concealed about his person. It was a man who loved all knowledge, hated all superstition; who, rich and safe, did not forget the poor and miserable whose lives were in continual jeopardy; who, though a Frenchman

of the Frenchmen, was indifferent to national glory purchased by poor men's lives; who felt in his own shrinking flesh the torture of the humblest victim of intolerance; who made his own, the cause of every man unjustly punished; who, when he could not rescue from the Infamous the victim around whom it had already coiled, still gave himself no rest till he had vindicated the poor victim's memory. Acknowledge every fault and every limitation, and still, because he honored human nature in its humblest incarnations, and did great battle against everything which kept men down in ignorance, and held them back from higher possibilities of truth and good, and robbed their lives of safety, peace and joy, shall we not keep his memory green and honor him as one among the many saviors of the world?

Do you want a man *not* to practice what he believes?—Encourage him to keep often speaking of it in words. Every time he speaks it, the tendency to do it will grow less.

"There are many men who, when the sun is shining brightly upon them, stand with their backs to it, gloomily gazing at their own dark shadows; and the brighter the sun shines, and the more clear and well-defined the shadow becomes, the more do they mourn."

Strength is seen not in spasms, but in stout bearing of burdens.

"What ritual is to the formalist, or contemplation to the devotee, business is to the man of the world."—ARTHUR HELPS.

"Beneath all thy pain be not only serene, but more: let it avail thee in prayer. Put up at the moment of greatest suffering a prayer—not for thy own escape, but for the enfranchisement of some being dear to thee, and the Sovereign Spirit will accept thy ransom."—MARGARET FULLER.

"There is a species of cactus, from whose outer bark, if torn by an ignorant person, exudes a poisonous liquid; but the natives, who know the plant, strike to the core, and there find a sweet refreshing juice that renews their strength."—MARGARET FULLER.

Notes and News.

Mr. CHADWICK's paper on Voltaire is so timely that we gladly add a cubit to our stature this week to take it in.

The next issue will contain W. C. GANNETT's paper on "Constructive and Destructive Liberalism," read at the recent meeting of the Western Unitarian Conference.

The Western Unitarian Conference at Chicago.—The goodness of a Church Conference cannot be reported. It lies in the heartiness of hand-grasps, the welcome in eyes and tones, the brightness of the platform and the quick response from listeners, the eagerness of discussion, nor least in the out-of-sight preparation, which makes the "business" move on with a snap, keeps little matters little, and brings main subjects forward with emphasis; perhaps, too, in the bringing of one or two matters so far to the front that the churches will remember each meetiug as "that on which we did such or such a thing." In some of these respects, the twenty-fourth session of the Western Unitarian Conference, held in the Church of the Messiah at Chicago, June 4-6, was thoroughly "good." It was an ideal "sociable" from first to last, and a long lesson in hospitality. Everyone you met—and you met many—seemed *ex-officio* an acquaintance. There was no whit of wrangling theological. As Mr. COLLYER put it, "The Conference did not contemplate its own inside much, nor look at its own back." Nor were there any *very* hard hits at Orthodoxy. Of course, we were the Liberals! But then, why hold the Conference if we were not? "Limp Liberalism" was not at all in favor. Our responsibility as teachers of the Liberal belief and temper was the theme constantly touched. Mr. SNYDER's opening sermon gave the key-note in urging us to "Work *with* God," instead of leaving God to do all the work himself; and Mr. CUTTER's fair paper on the true and false Sectarianism, Mr. HUNTING's practical suggestions for Western work, Mrs. WOOLLEY's thoughtful words about the Liberal Woman's part in that work, and Mr. GANNETT's essay on the Constructive Liberal, all turned upon that point.

The papers were earnest rather than brilliant; the spirit catholic, hopeful, on-looking. Mr. HERBERT's brightness about the new "John the Baptist" needed, was all too short. Three wise men from the East, CHADWICK, SHIPPEN and ALLEN, opened their treasures and pre-

sented gifts—one of experience, one of cheer, and CHADWICK of an inspiring sermon on the "Infinite Side of Human Nature." GORDON, JONES, WENDTE, and others, spoke at the platform-meeting at the end, and ROBERT COLLYER's bit of poetry about the bird-songs of the old land and the bird-songs of the new,—these loved, but those longed for, too, by the immigrant,—made a tender benediction and good-by; the result of Liberalism, he hoped, would not be all "new school," nor all "old school," but the whole blended.

Mr. JONES, the Missionary of the Conference, reported forty-eight fields labored in as against thirty-eight the previous year. He did not say, what we learned from another source, that the Executive Committee actually had to tell him early *not* to do this work save at his own risk, so very slowly did the churches send in their allotted contributions! He took the risk; and his faith was *nearly* rewarded by the sums made up in the very last moments of the year. The churches not yet heard from, it is hoped, will cancel all our debt to him. Even as it is, the debt is less than it was a year ago; but it greatens our discredit that two years running should see service like our missionary's unpaid for. Let each church try to be the first, rather than the last, this year!

But in some respects the Conference was not ideal. The business was carelessly prepared; there was far too little discussion; and very little practical work was suggested. The Sunday School Society's meeting was the pleasantest of all the meetings, because there *was* discussion, and the questions raised *were* practical; it was the livest, cosiest three hours of the whole good time. Two movements, however, that looked towards work were mentioned, but neither received the push that should have been given them by a general debate. One concerned the formation of State Missionary Associations, like that formed in Iowa, and noticed in the following article. The other is hinted in the following resolutions, reported from the "Women's Committee," organized a year ago:

"*Resolved*, That we, the women of the Western Conference, hereby signify not only our willingness, but our earnest desire, to share henceforth with our brothers in the labors and the responsibilities of this Association; and that we pledge ourselves to an active and hearty support of those cherished convictions which constitute our Liberal Faith, and to which we owe a heart-whole and undying allegiance."

"To the practical furtherance of the above, be it also

"*Resolved*, That we request of the officers and members of the Conference the election of an Assistant Secretary; such office to be filled by a woman, who shall have charge of all correspondence and general business relating to the work of women in the Conference, and to present a report of the same at each annual meeting.

"*Finally*, That we recommend to the women connected with the Conference that each shall organize within her vicinity an association of women for the study and dissemination of the principles of free thought and liberal religious culture, and the practical assistance of all worthy schemes and enterprises intended for the spread and upholding of these principles."

Accordingly the Conference elected Miss F. L. ROBERTS, Assistant Secretary. We hope within a month or two, to report the work begun by this "Women's Committee" and their new representative.

The following is the list of officers for the year:

President—D. L. SHOREY, of Chicago.

Vice-President—Rev. ROBERT COLLYER, of Chicago.

Second Vice-President—JOSEPH SHIPPEN, of St. Louis.

Recording and Corresponding Secretary—Rev. J. T. SUNDERLAND.

Missionary Secretary—Rev. J. L. JONES, of Janesville, Wis.

Assistant Secretary—Miss FRANCES L. ROBERTS.

Treasurer—MURRY NELSON, of Chicago.

Directors—Rev. J. C. LEARNED, of St. Louis; Rev. J. MILLER, of Illinois; Rev. W. C. GANNETT, of St. PAUL, Minn.; Rev. S. S. HUNTING, of Iowa; Rev. G. W. COOKE, of Michigan; Rev. G. W. CUTTER, of Buffalo; Prof. GEORGE CAREY, of Penn.; Mrs. MCKAY, of Ind.; Rev. J. H. HAYWOOD, of Ky.; Mrs. THEODORE STENWOCK, of Ohio; Prof. G. C. CHURCH, of Neb.; Mrs. E. P. ALLIS, of Wis.

Delegates to the National Conference—D. L. SHOREY, GEORGE PARTRIDGE, Rev. J. L. JONES.

Preacher for the next Conference—Rev. CALVIN STEBBINS; alternate, Rev. J. T. SUNDERLAND.—W. C. G.

One Way to Start Liberal Churches.—(1) *Form a State Association* of existing churches, as a reservoir of strength. A year ago the Iowa Unitarian Association was organized on the following platform: "*Whereas*, Entire freedom is necessary to the growth of religion in the souls of men, and creed-bound organizations are an obstacle to human progress and happiness; *Resolved*, that we hereby unite ourselves into a permanent society for the purpose of building up free churches based on practical righteousness, in the State of Iowa." It has lately held its first annual meeting at Des Moines. A friend writes: "Its influence will be felt throughout the State. The delegates were few, but they separated feeling that in in more senses than one they had been 'on the heights.' From these heights of the capital city, we think that our banner of 'Freedom, Fellowship and Character' now floats steadily and surely. * * Mr. JONES' visit is in itself a Baptism to any Conference. * * Mr. EFFINGER'S report was so full of encouragement and stimulus that two thousand copies were printed for distribution though the State."

(2) *Get a live man for missionary.* Send to Des Moines and get one of J. R. EFFINGER's reports showing how to go to work in places where everybody says "No use to try!" Of course, it is not a record of unmixed success; but by the faith which includes work, he has made Des Moines the centre of a little circuit of "free churches based on practical righteousness." We quote the story of Marshalltown. It begins thus:

"The second Sunday in July brought your missionary around again to Des Moines, and the third to Atlantic, and then it was necessary to find two other preaching posts and complete the organization of the circuit without delay. Letters had been written to Marshalltown and Ottumwa, but no answers came. The silence was ominous. So I went first to Marshalltown, and called on the gentleman to whom I had written, and received from him the most positive assurances that I had come on a wild goose chase. It had been demonstrated that nothing could be done there on the basis of liberal Christianity. I was directed to Deacon W., who had stood in former years as a pillar of strength in the liberal cause, and who was thoroughly posted in regard to the situation. And did he not know? He was absolutely certain that any attempt to organize the Liberals of Marshalltown would be a failure. But it seemed best to fight it out on that line (it was Friday evening), and before Sunday I had visited ten or a dozen families of the place friendly to the cause I represented, and the Saturday afternoon papers contained a new announcement among the Sunday notices, and little white hand-bills went flying through the town; and, when the morrow came, Whitton's hall held a fair audience and a responsive one to the glad tidings of heresy. They decided to join the new circuit, and immediately took steps towards organizing the Marshalltown Unitarian Association for the purpose of sustaining a free church founded on practical righteousness."

And it ends thus: "Marshalltown has gone steadily forward with most encouraging prospects. The congregations there have been large, sometimes estimated at two hundred or more. The ladies have had regular meetings for sewing, and have sustained their sociables with great spirit and success. A Unitarian sociable has come to mean *the* social event of the week or month. It really looks as if we might become the fashion in Marshalltown. We have in our congregation many of the representative men of the place—leading merchants, lawyers, physicians, and intelligent mechanics, and, as a matter of course, most excellent women. Three weeks ago a Sunday School was organized there, something that had been talked about for some months, but postponed until they were quite ready for it. One of the leading young physicians of the place was elected Superintendent, and a corps of teachers was readily secured. They began with $90 worth of bright, new books in a handsome new book-case. They have the "Sunny

Side" singing-book and "The Way of Life" service-book; and a letter came to me last week saying the school went off splendidly the Sunday previous. They are talking about services twice a month, but at present have no arrangements for more than one."

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